



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

News Release

July 13, 2005

ICE TARGETS 32 PEDOPHILES AND SUSPECTED INTERNET CHILD PORNOGRAPHERS IN ORANGE COUNTY

SANTA ANA, Calif. – An Orange County resident who allegedly exchanged child pornography over the Internet with men who sexually exploited their own children and a Salvadoran national convicted of drugging and sexually assaulting two teens are among the 32 individuals targeted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in Orange County this past week as part of Operation Predator, a nationwide ICE initiative to protect children from those who sexually exploit them.

Michael Drake, 40, is expected to make his initial appearance in federal court here today to face charges of possessing and distributing child pornography over the Internet. Drake, who was arrested by ICE agents this morning, came under investigation after he emailed sexually explicit images of children to an undercover police officer in Florida who was posing as one of Drake's former contacts. The Orange, California salesman was apparently unaware that his former contact had been arrested and jailed for molesting his own children.

In addition to Drake, nine other Orange County men are facing federal child pornography charges as a result of ICE investigations. The 10 ICE suspects are among 28 defendants caught up in a multi-agency sweep announced by the United States Attorney's Office today that focused on Southland defendants accused of possessing and distributing child pornography.

Also arrested by ICE agents in Orange County this past week were 22 convicted alien sex offenders who were taken into custody on administrative immigration violations and now face deportation from the United States. The foreign nationals arrested by ICE during the last week include Manuel Gonzalez-Rodriguez, 36, an undocumented Mexican national who lives in Santa Ana. Gonzalez was convicted in Orange County in December 1998 on charges stemming from an incident where he drugged and sexually assaulted two unconscious teenage girls.

While the foreign nationals were initially arrested on administrative immigration violations, three are being criminally prosecuted on local charges for failing to register as sex offenders and two others are facing felony charges for re-entering the country after deportation.

All of these cases are part of Operation Predator, a comprehensive ICE initiative aimed at those who prey on children, including human traffickers, international sex tourists, Internet pornographers, and foreign national predators whose crimes make them deportable. Nearly 900 of the 5,900 child sex

offenders arrested by ICE nationwide as part of Operation Predator have been made by agents assigned to the Los Angeles ICE office.

“These pedophiles and child pornographers pose a serious threat to the well-being of our children, our families, and our communities,” said Kumar Kibble, assistant special agent-in-charge for ICE investigations in Orange County. “We will continue to work closely with our local and federal law enforcement partners to identify, arrest, and prosecute those who prey on and exploit the children here in Orange County.”

The foreign nationals targeted in this latest enforcement action in Orange County were chosen by ICE agents, in coordination with local authorities, using information from the Megan’s Law and other sexual predator databases. ICE agents conducted extensive immigration and criminal history checks on those listed, and identified individuals whose crimes make them subject to removal from the United States.

Additional information about Operation Predator is available on the Web at www.ice.gov. ICE encourages the reporting of suspected child predators and any suspicious activity through its toll-free hotline at 1-866-DHS-2ICE. This hotline is staffed around the clock by investigators. Suspected child sexual exploitation or missing children may be reported to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, an Operation Predator partner, at 1-800-843-5678 or <http://www.cybertipline.com>.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.